BATTLES AND ENGAGEMENTS

of the

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

in

NORTH CAROLINA

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FOREWORD

In the belief that North Carolina has never received her just share in the initiation, prosecution, and termination of the War of the American Revolution, this pamphlet is undertaken. The Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge (the Lexington and Concord of the South), King's Mountain (won by the Over-the-Mountain Boys from North Carolina), and the decisive Battle of Guilford Courthouse (which led directly to Yorktown and the surrender of Cornwallis) need to be re-evaluated in the light of their over-all significance. Nor should the dashing and heroic exploits of North Carolina's partisan leaders be ignored as contributing factors in the denouement.

Though the object of much historical research and writing, North Carolina's contributions to the Southern campaign and her role in the actual winning of independence from the Mother Country have never been adequately emphasized.

It is the purpose of this pamphlet, therefore, to see the various battles and engagements, fought on North Carolina soil, placed in their proper perspective.

THE BATTLE OF MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE

February 27, 1776

APPROPRIATELY TERMED "the Lexington and Concord of the South," the three-fold significance of this battle is only recently receiving its deserved recognition throughout the nation. And well it should!

Specifically, it played an important role in keeping down the Tories, or Loyalists (estimated at one-third of the population), in North Carolina until the approach of Cornwallis four years later. It served to thwart the grand, coordinated strategy of North Carolina's royal governor, Josiah Martin, and the British War Office for subjugating the colony. But perhaps most important, its success gave such an impetus to the spirit of independence that North Carolina was impelled to lead all the American colonies in her forthright and spirited declaration of independence. In fact, exactly forty-five days after this battle, the Fourth Provincial Congress, meeting at Halifax, adopted, on April 12, 1776, the famous Halifax Resolves. These resolves—the first authentic action by any colony—instructed North Carolina's delegates in Continental Congress at Philadelphia "to concur with the delegates of the other Colonies in declaring Independency." This turn gave the needed stimulus to Continental Congress to adopt the American Declaration of Independence almost three months later.

The events leading to this important battle are of great interest. Governor Josiah Martin, having taken refuge aboard the British warship *Cruizer* off Cape Fear, conceived a bold plan by which the British high command, under Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis, would land in February, 1776, at Wilmington, where they would be joined by a large force of Tories—mostly recently-arrived Highland Scots from the Cape Fear Valley. Together he confidently expected them to stamp out the incipient rebellion in North Carolina and roll over the other Southern colonies. The best laid plans went awry, however, and the expected British troops were delayed.

Meanwhile, from Boston General Thomas Gage had sent two Scots, Donald MacDonald and Donald McLeod, to rally the Loyalists of the Cape Fear. After rendezvousing at Cross Hill (present Carthage) and Cross Creek (present Fayetteville), some 1600 Highlanders began their march to Wilmington.

But they had reckoned without the Whig patriots. Directed by Colonel James Moore, about 1,100 North Carolinians, under the immediate leadership of Colonels Richard Caswell and Alexander Lillington, had taken up their position on the south side of Moore's Creek Bridge, about eighteen miles above Wilmington. Here they had removed the flooring of the bridge and had greased the log sleepers with soft soap and tallow to make the crossing virtually impossible for the enemy.

Falling into this neat trap, the Highlanders about sunrise on February 27th attempted the difficult crossing. Met by a devastating storm of swan-shot and bullets, they withstood the fire for about three minutes. It was too much for them. They beat a hasty retreat, leaving their commander, McLeod, dead, along with about fifty others killed and wounded. The Whigs lost only one killed and one wounded.

Colonel Moore, who had just arrived, pursued the fleeing Highlanders and captured 350 guns, 1,500 rifles, 150 swords and dirks, 13 wagons, 15,000 pounds in gold, 850 officers and soldiers, including General Donald MacDonald and Allen MacDonald, husband of the celebrated heroine of the Hebrides, Flora.

For the next four years, the State was free from invasion from without and insurrection from within. Only the Cherokees in the West posed a real threat.

THE CHEROKEE EXPEDITION

Summer, 1776

IN MAY of this same spring of 1776, a large British force under Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis dropped anchor in the Cape Fear River. This long-expected event no doubt gave courage to British agents to persuade the Cherokee Indians of the west to take the warpath against

the Americans, who had settled upon their hunting grounds.

Under the leadership of one Cameron, a Tory, the Cherokee warriors of Upper and Middle town, along with some Creeks and Tories, began in July, 1776, to pour down upon the mountain settlements, massacring, pillaging, and burning. Forthwith the alarm was sounded throughout North Carolina and neighboring Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. Each new ſtate simultaneously launched an expedition againſt the Cherokee in the summer of 1776.

The North Carolina expedition, comprising 2,400 men, was led by General Griffith Rutherford. These ſtalwart men crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains at Swannanoa Gap in Auguſt and ſtruck firſt at the Indian town of Stikayi on the Tuckasegee River, which they promptly deſtroyed. In rapid succession they burned at leaſt thirty-six Indian towns on the Tuskasegee, Oconoluftee, the upper part of the Little Tennessee, and on the Hiwassee to below the junction of Valley River.

The chief ſtand of the Red Men was taken as Rutherford was passing through Waya Gap in the Nantahala Mountains. Here the whites loſt more than forty men in killed and wounded, before they put the Reds to flight. Their reſiſtance broken, the Cherokee fled behind the Great Smokey Mountains.

Meanwhile Rutherford was joined near the present town of Murphy by Colonel Andrew Williamson with 1,800 South Carolinians. On their way to join them was Colonel William Chriſtian of Virginia with about 1,700 Virginians and 300 North Carolinians. The combined efforts of the near 6,000 militia completely paralyzed Cherokee reſiſtance from the Virginia line to the Chattahootchie.

Accordingly they sued for peace and on May 20, 1777, at De Witts Corner in South Carolina, the firſt treaty ever made by the Cherokee with the new ſtates was concluded. By the terms of this treaty and one at the Long Island in the Holſton River, the Indians surrendered moſt of their hunting grounds eaſt of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Except for sporadic uprisings in 1779 and in December 1780, put down by Colonel Evan Shelby and Colonel John Sevier reſpectively, the great Indian menace was successfully nullified by Rutherford's expedition of 1776.

THE BATTLE OF RAMSOUR'S MILL

June 14, 1780

WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION of the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, this battle represents the most important—and serious—uprising of the Tories, or Loyalists, within North Carolina during the War. The fall of Charleston, May 12, 1780, and the temporary subjugation of the two southern-most states, Georgia and South Carolina, had given new confidence to the Tories west of the Catawba River.

The instigator of their uprising was James Moore, of Lincoln County, who has just returned from fighting with the British in South Carolina and who announced himself as Lieutenant Colonel Moore of the regiment of North Carolina Loyalists. By June 14, 1780, he had assembled about eleven hundred of the "disaffected" at Ramsour's Mill, about a half-mile from the present town of Lincolnton in the just-created county of Lincoln.

Informed of this embodiment of Tories, Griffith Rutherford, Brigadier of the Salisbury District, then protecting Charlotte, ordered Colonel Francis Locke of Rowan County and Major Robert Wilson of Mecklenburg County to disperse them. Three days later, Rutherford himself was temporarily released from his vigil and set out for Ramsour's. Meanwhile Colonel Locke, having hastily assembled about four hundred of the militia of Burke, Lincoln, and Rowan counties, reached Mountain Creek, sixteen miles from Ramsour's on June 19th. That night he called a council which decided to attack the enemy despite the disparity of numbers.

Accordingly at daybreak they advanced upon the Tories, who were encamped on a high ridge, clear of underbrush and covered with large oaks. Their right flank was protected by a mill pond, their rear by a strong fence. Moore's men, drawn up behind trees and baggage, returned a well-directed fire upon the advancing militia. After a general action which lasted about thirty minutes, during which the militia pressed forward "with great spirit and intrepidity," the Loyalists retreated.

An hour later Rutherford arrived on the scene and dispatched Major William R. Davie's cavalry to pursue the fugitives and clear the country of all stragglers.

Davie later reported that "many came and surrendered voluntarily" and "a great number were taken prisoners, some flying to South Carolina, others at their plantations, and in a few days that district . . . between the river, the mountains and their (the South Carolina) line was entirely cleared of the Enemy."

This engagement is important because it dispersed the last formidable concentration of Tories west of the Catawba River.

WAHABS

September 9, 1780

AFTER THE TRAGIC DEFEAT of General Horatio Gates at the Battle of Camden and of Thomas Sumter at Fishing Creek in August, 1780, South Carolina was completely at the mercy of the British, while North Carolina, wide open to attack, was in a condition of nervousness and unrest.

By September 8th, Lord Cornwallis and Tarleton, rested from these two engagements, moved the army up to the Waxhaws, below Charlotte, where they hoped to enlist Tory recruits and procure food and forage. The depredations of the predatory Loyalists, posted on Cornwallis' left flank, prompted Colonel William R. Davie to check these "lawless marauders."

With his corps of hard-riding cavalry and Major George Davidson's riflemen—in all, a bare 150 men—Davie set out towards his target: 400 of Lieutenant Banastre Tarleton's Tories encamped at the plantation of Captain James Wauchope (usually referred to as Wahab) in the southern part of present Union County, North Carolina. Davie reached the plantation at sun-up, just as a British party was going out on command. He at once detached an infantry company to take the main house and its dependencies. The cavalry was sent around to attack from the rear. Davie, with forty riflemen, advanced in front.

This three-pronged attack completely surprised the enemy who fled at full speed. As a result of this daring raid the British, according to Davie's report, "left fifteen or twenty dead on the field and had about forty wounded," with only one American wounded.

Upon Davie's departure, Tarleton "out of pique or a mistaken & cruel policy," returned and set fire to the houses, barns, and fences. Moreover, he was able to seize "ninety six horses with their furniture, & one hundred & twenty stand of arms"—all desperately needed by the destitute North Carolinians.

Here again was a striking instance of the courage of the North Carolinians in harassing the British.

THE DEFENSE OF CHARLOTTE

September 28, 1780

BY LATE SEPTEMBER, 1780, Lord Cornwallis was unable to supply his army in the Waxhaws—that indefinite section on both sides of the Catawba River below Charlotte. In the hope of "greener fields," he set his army in motion towards Charlotte, North Carolina. To impede his approach was Colonel William R. Davie with a corps of only 150 dragoons and mounted infantry and some volunteers under Major Joseph Graham.

On the 28th, this small band was driven back to Charlotte by Colonel Banastre Tarleton's Legion, which preceded the main British army. The town itself, according to Davie, contained "about twenty Houses built on two streets (now Trade and Tryon) which cross each other at right angles in the intersection of which stands the Court-House." A peculiar edifice, as described by Joseph Graham, "it was a frame building raised on eight brick pillars ten feet from the ground . . . . Between the pillars was erected a wall of rock three and a half feet high and the open basement answered as a market house for the town."

Resolutely Davie posted one company under this peculiar structure. The other two companies he advanced about eight yards, posting them behind some houses and gardens on each side of the street.

Meanwhile Tarleton's Legion, flanked by the light infantry, had formed three hundred yards in front. The cavalry charge advanced to within sixty yards of the embattled courthouse, where the American fire forced them to retreat "with great precipitation." The British light infantry, more resolute, pressed forward on the right flank, forcing the withdrawal of the two advanced companies of Davie's men to the courthouse, where their flanks were hotly engaged with the oncoming infantry. The cavalry rallied and charged again. Again it "galloped off in the outmost confusion, in the presence of the whole British army." While the infantry was turning Davie's right flank, his men retreated under a galling fire to a position one hundred yards behind the courthouse. Again the British cavalry charged and again were forced to wheel off behind the houses. At this point, Lord Cornwallis, vexed at their repeated repulsions, rode up in person and exhorted:

"Legion! Remember you have everything to lose, but nothing to gain!"

This time the legion, reinforced by the cavalry, forced the handful of brave Americans to retreat along the Salisbury road.

The American loss was Lieutenant George Locke of Rowan County, and four privates killed and Major Graham and five privates wounded. The British stated their loss at 12 non-commissioned officers killed and a major, two captains and thirty privates wounded.

This daring engagement furnishes a striking instance of the bravery and importance of the North Carolina militia. In fact, according to Davie, "few examples can be shewn of any troops who in one action changed their position twice in good order although pressed by a much superior body of Infantry and charged three times by thrice their number of Cavalry, unsupported & in the presence of the enemys whole army and finally retreating in perfect order."

And the historian of the British Army, Charles Stedman, himself an officer under Cornwallis, commented: "The whole of the British Army was actually kept at bay for some minutes by a few mounted Americans, not exceeding twenty in number."

KING'S MOUNTAIN

October 7, 1780

ALTHOUGH geographically speaking the site of the actual Battle of King's Mountain occurred over a mile within South Carolina territory, it was nevertheless a North Carolina battle. Viewed in its proper perspective, it was responsible for thwarting Cornwallis's plans to invade North Carolina at that time and contributed materially towards his eventual defeat at Yorktown.

After the ignominious defeat of General Horatio Gates at Camden, South Carolina, in August 1780, Lord Cornwallis mapped out his grand strategy for the subjugation of the Old North State. He, with the main British Army, was to march straight up to Charlotte, thence to Hillsboro, where he had ordered a store of supplies and magazines to be collected by the Tories of that section. His right flank was to be protected by Major James Craig, who was to seize the important port of Wilmington—which he did in January, 1781. His left flank was to be protected by the intrepid, sharpshooting "Bull Dog," Major Patrick Ferguson and his 900 British and Tory fighters.

Ferguson started north at once from Ninety-Six, South Carolina, in pursuit of partisan bands of "Over-the-Mountain" men, whom he pursued as far north as Gilbert Town (near the present site of the county seat, Rutherfordton) in Rutherford County. From here he sent a threatening message to the sturdy and independent mountaineers of the Carolinas. Loftily he declared that "if they did not desist . . . (their depredations) he would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay their country waste with fire and sword." This cavalier challenge was taken up by the "Over-the-Mountain" men. Led by North Carolina Colonels Isaac Shelby, Charles McDowell, John Sevier, and Benjamin Cleveland, and by Virginia's Colonel William Campbell, they set out, some 1800 strong, to attack Ferguson.

When they reached Gilbert Town they received word that Ferguson, beating a hasty retreat towards the headquarters of Cornwallis at Charlotte, had established his

army on the southern extremity of King's Mountain, now in York County, South Carolina, just below the border. Here, atop the ſteep promontory covered with underbrush, Ferguson confidently proclaimed that "he was on King's Mountain, and that he was king of that mountain," and that "all the Rebels from hell" could not drive him away.

And here, on the afternoon of October 7th, they were surrounded by the Americans. Led by Campbell, Sevier, Shelby, and Cleveland they coolly and surreptitiously began the thickly covered ascent. The firſt rifle shot alerted the unsuspecting British and Tories, who ſtumbled to defend themselves. An hour's combat convinced the Tories and British that the rebels were "from hell." Trapped like a beaſt at bay they fought heroically, but moſt of their fire shot over the heads of their assailants. Ferguson himself, clad in a bright hunting shirt, mounted on a white charger, and intermittently sounding a silver whiſtle above the din of battle, was a natural target for the mountaineers. Disdaining cover, he gallantly perservered until he fell mortally wounded. Thus deprived of his inspiration, his men threw down their arms.

No victory could have been more complete. Ferguson's corps was entirely wiped out: One hundred and fifty-seven killed, 163 wounded, and the remaining 698 taken prisoner by the Americans. The American loss was only 28 killed and 62 wounded.

This victory heralded the firſt ray of optimism to pierce the dark clouds that had hung over the Carolinas since the fall of Charleſton in May. The uneasy Cornwallis haſtily retraced his ſteps to Winnsboro, South Carolina. That unorganized, undisciplined volunteers should have achieved so great a victory over such a force of trained, seasoned, well armed veterans was no mean feat.

George Washington appraised it as "a proof of the spirit and resources of the country." Sir George Clinton lamented it as a "fatal cataſtrophe." American patriots hailed it as a turning point in the fight for freedom.

COWAN'S FORD

January 31, 1781

SOON AFTER the outstanding victory of the Virginia brigadier general, Daniel Morgan, over Tarleton's British Legion at the Battle of the Cowpens on January 17, 1781, Morgan set out with his men for North Carolina. Lord Cornwallis and Tarleton's Legion were in hot pursuit.

General Nathanæl Greene, the new commander of the Southern Army, apprized of the situation, set out from the Pee Dee to join Morgan. On January 31st the two generals, with only an escort, met at Beatty's Ford on the east side of the Catawba River. Here they were joined by General William Lee Davidson, commandant of the militia of this area. After instructing Davidson to slow the pursuit of the on-coming British in their crossing of the Catawba, the other two generals set out for Salisbury.

Davidson, knowing there were no bridges across the river, divided his militia between Beatty's Ford and Cowan's Ford, further down the river. In an effort to surprise the Americans, Cornwallis dispatched his wagons and some artillery pieces to Beatty's Ford, while the main body of his army marched to Cowan's Ford, where they arrived at daybreak.

The American sentries, hearing but not seeing the British splashing through the swift water, fired several shots at the sounds. This awakened the sleeping militia who rushed to take their positions behind trees on the river bank.

The on-coming British, roped together to prevent being swept away by the current, struggled on in the face of whining musket balls. The advance units reached shore where they formed a battle line. Their rapid musket fire drove the militia back towards the rear. General Davidson, determined to rally them, was putting his foot into the stirrup to mount his horse when he was struck dead by a musket ball in his chest.

Seeing the death of their commander, the militia took to their heels and Cornwallis and his soaked army achieved their crossing.

Tarleton, sent in pursuit of the militia, came upon a large

group at nearby Torrence's Tavern. Here his men swooped down upon the startled North Carolinians who scattered to the woods, leaving the British army to continue its pursuit of General Greene in his race for the Dan River in Virginia.

Despite a number of small skirmishes between Greene's rear guard and the advance guard of Cornwallis, the Quaker general made good his escape, crossing the Dan River at Boyd's Ferry on February 14th.

PYLE'S MASSACRE

February 25, 1781

AS SOON AS General Nathanæl Greene had secured his army beyond the Dan River and beyond the immediate threat of Cornwallis, he sent "Light Horse Harry" Lee and his Legion and a group under General Andrew Pickens of South Carolina back across the Dan. They were to observe the movements of the enemy.

Cornwallis, it was learned, had retreated to Hillsboro where he raised the royal standard, calling on all Loyalists to rally to the King's cause—but few did. Word was also received that Colonel Banastre Tarleton's cavalry with four hundred infantry and two pieces of artillery had been dispatched toward Haw River to the west of Hillsboro.

This news incited Lee to make a surprise attack upon the dashing Tarleton. Forthwith Lee's Legion and Pickens' men were in pursuit. Near the present site of Burlington, in Alamance County, on February 25th, 1781, they stumbled upon a group of Tories under Doctor John Pyle on their way to Hillsboro to join Cornwallis. Pyle, a former Regulator of Chatham County, had taken an oath of allegiance to George III and as a matter of conscience had raised a band of about 300 Tories between the Haw and Deep Rivers.

As luck would have it, Lee's Legion wore green jackets similar to those of Tarleton's Legion. Knowing Tarleton was in the vicinity, Pyle's Tories naturally mistook Lee's Legion for the latter. This error suited Lee who was intent on suprising Tarleton, reported to be not two miles away.

Realizing Pyle's understandable mistake but not apprising his men of the true situation, Lee marched his men without hesitation through the opened ranks of the Tories. The patriot column had almost passed when some of their men in the rear recognized the sprigs of green in the hats of the Tories. With lightening rapidity the word was passed ahead and the patriots fell on the Tories, incredulous that they should be attacked by Tarleton's men. Repeated cries of "Hurrah for King George!" and "I am a friend to his Majesty" only served to whet the appetite of the bloodthirsty patriots.

As a result over ninety Tories lay dead on the ground; others later died of their wounds; few escaped. The Americans did not lose a man—only one horse.

In a measure this was retaliation for Tarleton's bloody massacre of Buford's men in South Carolina which had earned for the Britisher the sobriquet "No Quarter" Tarleton.

Ironically the encounter had a two-fold effect: It allowed the escape of Tarleton to Hillsboro, but it also served to cool the ardor of many luke-warm Tories in the piedmont section.

WETZEL'S MILL

March 6, 1781

GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE, after recouping his forces at Halifax County Court House, in Virginia, recrossed the Dan on February 23rd, on his way back to give battle to Cornwallis. In order to protect his main army on his march to Guilford Courthouse he detached a command under the gallant Colonel Otho Williams of Maryland. Meanwhile Cornwallis, after his disappointing sojourn in Hillsboro, had moved up to Alamance Creek, between the Deep and Haw Rivers, on the road to Salisbury.

At this time Greene was encamped at Speedwell Iron Works on upper Troublesome Creek, thirty miles distant, awaiting two North Carolina and two Virginia brigades marching up from a point below Hillsboro. The road passed twenty-five miles north of Cornwallis' camp. Williams' post

lay beween that point and Cornwallis. The road from this post intersected the road Cornwallis would travel to strike the approaching militia at Wetzel's Mill. Greene now cautiously moved his troops down to Boyd's Mill, on Reedy Fork, seven miles above Wetzel's Mill, where he anxiously awaited the outcome.

At dawn on March 6th, Cornwallis made a sudden dash north in order to outstrip Williams to Wetzel's Mill and intercept the American militia at High Rock Ford, ten miles further on the Haw River. Williams, learning of this movement, set out at once to the rescue of his approaching friends. A "neck and neck" race along converging roads ensued. The Whig leader, less encumbered than Cornwallis, urged his men on. By an excess of vigor and speed they were able to dash down the hill and splash across the Reedy Fork just as the enemy entered behind them on the other road.

Williams stationed his men on the north side and greeted the approaching Redcoats with a galling fire. The British staggered back momentarily, but then brought up their artillery to cover the crossing. Williams discretely retreated. The British pursued him for five miles and then turned back.

Cornwallis fell back to his old encampment at Alamance. He had failed to separate Williams and Greene, and Greene's militia reenforcements were able to join Greene at High Rock Ford.

This encounter, though brief, was sharp, and represents one of the more dramatic incidents of the American Revolution.

THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

March 15, 1781

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the decisive Battle of Guilford Courthouse, fought on the Ides of March, 1781. Yet it is hard to over-emphasize its importance as the turning point not only in the Southern Campaign, but in the Revolution itself. The last major battle fought by Cornwallis before his surrender at Yorktown, Virginia,

seven months later, it was a pyhrric victory of such significance that Charles James Fox was provoked to announce in the British Parliament that "Another such victory would destroy the British army."

After General Nathanæl Greene's masterly twenty-three-day retreat across the Dan River, he rested his men and collected supplies and reinforcements. By March he recrossed the river, ready at last to match his forces against Lord Cornwallis. On March 14 he strategically took position at Guilford Courthouse. Cornwallis advanced from Hillsboro to meet him.

At daybreak the next day "Lighthorse Harry" Lee encountered the entire British Army at New Garden (now Guilford College), five miles to the south. Alerted by Lee, Greene drew up his battle lines about a long sloping hill. In front were the fresh North Carolina militia commanded by Generals John Butler and Thomas Eaton, who were reenforced by two of Greene's four cannons. Behind this line was the Virginia militia commanded by General Robert Lawson. At the crest of the hill was the third line, composed of the Continental troops. Their flanks were guarded by the cavalry units of Lee and Colonel William Washington. All told, here was an army of some 4,400 Colonials, mostly poorly equipped and untrained, of whom some 1700 were Continentals. Pitted against them were 2,200 seasoned British veterans.

Only three volleys were asked of the militia, after which the Continentals would be engaged. As the British swung into battle formation, two cannons on each side boomed for twenty minutes. The British advanced. At 100 yards the first line of North Carolinians fired. The British line staggered but came on. The North Carolinans, with no bayonets and no chance in close fighting, beat a hasty retreat, followed closely by the Virginians in the second line.

Now the British were faced by Greene's last battle line of Continentals—seasoned veterans, except the raw Second Maryland Regiment. The latter too beat a hasty retreat on the heels of the militia. But the First Maryland Regiment, commanded by Colonel John Gunby, stood firm. After a well-directed fire, they charged the Redcoats with bayonets. Fierce and bloody battle ensued. Colonel Washington's

cavalry charged, forcing the British into a panicky retreat. To save the day Cornwallis himself ordered his cannon to fire into the mixed Redcoats and Americans. The grapeshot ripped through the ranks of both, but stopped the British retreat. They promptly reformed.

With fresh troops, the Redcoats advanced, captured the enemy's four cannon and threatened to encircle Greene's men. Thus Greene gave the order for retreat.

Cornwallis, master of the field, of course claimed a victory, but the tactical victory was Greene's. Over a fourth of Cornwallis's troops had fallen and supplies were low. The American loss was less than one half as many men. Later Cornwallis himself admitted: "I never saw such fighting since God made me. The Americans fought like demons."

A battle had been won, but a campaign had been lost. Seven month's later, on October 19th, Cornwallis, thus weakened, surrendered and America was free.

BEATTY'S BRIDGE

August 4, 1781

WHILE the notorious Tory, David Fanning, was terrorizing the Deep River country from his base at Coxe's Mill in the summer of 1781, Hector McNeil and Duncan Ray, Tory Colonels of Bladen, were collecting the disaffected of the lower region. This body, estimated at about 400, ranged from Wilmington up as far as Drowning Creek and Richmond County, wreaking havoc and destruction upon the Whigs. Their stock was driven off and they were ordered to give up their arms.

By August 1, McNeil and Ray had embodied their men at McFall's Mill, between Drowning Creek and Raft Swamp, where they posed a serious threat to Campbellton (now Fayetteville), thirty-five miles way. A hurried letter was sent to Governor Burke by the militia commander in Cumberland.

Meanwhile, Colonel Thomas Wade, of Anson, had been apprized of the depredations of this "flying army" as far up as the Pee Dee River. He promptly called out half his regi-

ment, to which was added volunteer parties from Montgomery and Richmond counties. On Saturday, Auguſt 4th, they encountered the enemy at Beatty's Bridge on Drowning Creek.

A resulting sharp engagement laſted until midnight, at which time the Tories withdrew. They left twelve of their number dead and fifteen wounded. Wade suffered only four men wounded.

THE HOUSE IN THE HORSESHOE

August 5, 1781

TYPICAL of the ferocity of the internecine warfare in the upper Cape Fear Valley was the struggle beteen two protagoniſts of unusual ruthlessness, even for that day—"Colonel" Philip Alſton and David Fanning. Alſton had gathered about him at his home in the Horseshoe of Deep River (about ten miles above present-day Carthage) a band of patriots intent on protecting the country-side from Fanning's depredations.

In the summer of 1781 Alſton had murdered Kenneth Black, a Tory, whose only crime had been that of harboring such Tories as the celebrated Scottish heroine, Flora MacDonald, and Fanning himself. As might be expected, Fanning, juſt returned from his raid on Pittsboro, loſt no time in retaliation.

At daybreak on Sunday, Auguſt 5th, Fanning advanced his men in three parties toward the home of Alſton, now known as "The House in the Horseshoe." Their unheralded attack took the sleeping sentinels by surprise. The firing ſtartled a party of around twenty-five, sleeping on the porch, who ran inside and made all possible preparation for defense.

Tory shots soon demolished the windows, and many of the balls passed through the clapboard walls, killing or wounding the men inside. During the encounter, Mrs. Alſton "kept her bed, which was thought to be the safeſt place for her;" her two small children were put on a small table placed inside the fireplace, this being beyond shot.

A brisk fire between the assailants and the defenders continued till afternoon. In despair Fanning allowed a young lieutenant to lead an assault upon the house, but the leader was killed and the attack was foiled. Undaunted, Fanning bribed a free Negro to set fire to the house. This attempt was also foiled when Alston shot the Negro as he was about to apply the fire. In desperation, Fanning ordered his men to fill a nearby ox cart with straw, which he intended to set on fire and run up to the house.

Realizing his intent, Alston was on the point of surrender when Mrs. Alston came out of her room and took command of the situation. With perfect composure she raised a white flag, opened the door, and stepped out. Fanning met her half way and was informed that the inmates of the house would surrender if he promised that none should be injured. Fanning, out of admiration for her courage, agreed. The men surrounded and were immediately parolled.

THE BATTLE OF ELIZABETHTOWN

August 29, 1781

THE WHIGS of the Cape Fear, in the year 1781, were harassed and hunted from the lower and upper regions of the great valley. Major James H. Craig, with 451 British regulars, had occupied the port of Wilmington in January, 1781. An aggressive and bold soldier, he had greatly animated the spirits of the Tories of the Cape Fear and had forced the Whigs to play a cat and mouse game. Craig conducted numerous raids out of Wilmington. The most notable was a wide swing in August through Duplin, Dobbs, Jones and Craven counties. The countryside was laid waste; Whig homes were burned; terror ran rampant; and New Bern was plundered. With little real opposition he returned to his base at Wilmington.

In the upper valley, the notorious, brutal, and misanthropic David Fanning had rallied a group of ill-sorted Tories who rendezvoused at Coxe's Mill on the west side of Deep River at the mouth of Mill Creek in Randolph County, five miles from the Chatham County line. From this base

their depredations struck terror among the Whigs throughout the region. One group of these Tories—around 400 of them—had been stationed at Elizabethtown, county seat of Bladen County. Commanded by Colonel John Slingsby of the Bladen Loyalists, they held a number of Whig prisoners.

Having been driven from their homes and eager to retaliate against the Tory vise, some 150 Bladen Whigs, led by Colonel Thomas Brown, set out on the night of August 29 to seize Slingsby's post. Just before dawn the Whigs led a surprise attack upon the sleeping Tories. The Whig prisoners added to the confusion. Their disorder was complete. Their leaders fell before the well-directed fire of the Whig assailants. Those who could, fled precipitately, many of them leaping into a deep ravine which has since been known as "Tories' Hole." The victorious Whigs, realizing their inferior numbers, collected the arms and stores and retired across the river with their booty.

Three weeks later Archibald Maclaine wrote: "In this action we had only one man wounded; killed, wounded and taken of the enemy, nineteen. Slingsby since dead of his wounds."

This battle was one of the most daring in the partisan warfare of the region. Moreover, the Bladen Loyalists were put down and valuable supplies were seized by the Whigs.

Of the battle William Dickson of Duplin County wrote: "This put an end to the disturbances in Bladen; the Tories never embodied any more, so by this time our two distressed counties of Duplin and Bladen began to get the upper hand of their enemies."

RAFT SWAMP

September 1, 1781

RETALIATION for the encounter at Elizabethtown was swift. Colonel David Fanning, with great supplies of ammunition from Wilmington, had just returned to his temporary camp at McFall's Mill, about sixty miles from Elizabethtown. Upon hearing the Tory disaster there, he

immediately sent ninety of his men to assist his friends in routing the Whigs, but the birds had flown.

The same day he received word that Colonel Thomas Wade, of Anson County, with a band of Whigs was marching to attack Colonel Hector McNeil, whose Highland Scot Tories were encamped on Drowning Creek, in the vicinity of Raft Swamp. Setting his forces in motion at once, Fanning joined McNeil on the morning of September 1st. Here he found that Wade's men had taken post on the eastern side of Drowning Creek on an incline about a mile from a nearby bridge. The intervening road formed a narrow causeway.

Immediately sizing up the situation, Fanning directed the Scot to turn down the swamp to cut off Wade's retreat. Wade opened fire. Eighteen Tory horses fell. The Tories, undismayed, all dismounted and began a deadly assault, firing as they advanced. At twenty-five yards, the Whigs broke and fled down the road and across the bridge, which McNeil had failed to guard, as directed.

Fanning remounted his men and pursued the fleeing Whigs for seven miles. He took fifty-four prisoners, four of whom died that night. Nineteen more had been killed in action. Moreover, Fanning seized 250 horses. All this, he claimed, at the cost of one killed and a few wounded.

Unfortunately this was a costly retaliation for the Tory rout at Elizabethtown.

FANNING'S RAID ON HILLSBORO

September 12, 1781

THOUGH the daring seizure of Governor Thomas Burke by Tory David Fanning was, strictly speaking, a raid, no story of the events of the Revolution in North Carolina would be complete without it.

Fanning, while conferring with Major James Craig in Wilmington in the latter part of August 1781, had conceived the brilliant scheme of capturing the Whig governor. Craig agreed. Accordingly, after Wade's defeat at Raft Swamp, Fanning and Hector McNeil gathered together at Coxe's

Mill on Deep River a band of around 1,000 Tories and set out for their objective.

At that time the unsuspecting governor was in Hillsboro, intent on organizing a campaign against the Tories to the south, notably those operating under Fanning. He no doubt felt perfectly secure, because General John Butler's North Carolina militia were encamped nearby on the south bank of the Haw River. But word arrived that Fanning and McNeil were on the march. Burke quite naturally suspected that Butler's camp was his objective and on September 10th, dispatched a messenger to warn him.

That night and the following one—the 11th—no additional precautions were taken by the small detachment in Hillsboro. The inhabitants, rejoicing in the presence of the genial Irishman, the newly elected governor, had gone to bed oblivious of the impending threat.

Before dawn, however, they were rudely awakened by a sudden burst of musket fire. Under cover of a dark, foggy morning Fanning's men had surrounded the town. The Whig force garrisoned in the town was quickly put to rout. The men of the town fired several shots from their homes without inflicting any serious injury. Pandemonium ensued.

Fanning later reported: "We killed fifteen of the rebels and wounded twenty, and took upward of two hundred prisoners. Among them was the governor, his council, a party of continental colonels, captains and subalterns, and seventy-one continental soldiers taken out of a church. We proceeded to the jail and released thirty Loyalist and British soldiers, one of whom was to have been hanged on that day."

After locking the jailors in their prison and plundering a number of houses, Fanning and his men marched coolly out of town with their distinguished prizes on their way to Wilmington.

THE BATTLE OF CANE CREEK

September 13, 1781

DURING the confusion of Fanning's raid upon Hillsboro, Colonel Alexander Mebane escaped and galloped away to warn General John Butler of the catastrophe. Butler, intent on intercepting Fanning and recapturing

Governor Burke, took post at John Alston's mill, near Lindley's Mill, on Cane Creek. Here they waited.

The approaching force, consisting of Fanning's Tories and several hundred Highland Scots under Hector McNeil, with their prisoners, had marched out of Hillsboro shortly after noon and reached Cane Creek that night. The next morning, with the Scots in the lead, the Tories in the rear, they set out again towards Wilmington—completely unaware of the ambush which lay ahead.

Butler had posted his men across the stream along the high banks overlooking the road which led up from the ford. As the Scots forded the creek and marched innocently up the road, Butler's men opened a murderous fire. The Scots recoiled. Fanning hastily dispatched a guard to take his prisoners out of danger. Then he turned the tables by surprising the Whigs by crossing the stream higher up and attacking from an unexpected quarter. Now the Whigs were thrown into momentary confusion.

A bloody conflict ensued for four hours, after which the Whigs finally retreated. They left behind twenty-five killed, ninety wounded, and ten captured. Fanning's losses amounted to twenty-seven killed and ninety wounded. Among the dead was Colonel Hector McNeil, with three musket balls in his body. And Fanning himself received a wound in his arm which shattered the bone and rendered him *hors de combat* for several weeks.

Fanning's men continued with their prisoners to Wilmington, where Governor Burke was delivered over to Major Craig. Burke was sent to Charleston and Alexander Martin, Speaker of the Senate, served as acting governor of North Carolina until his return.